

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant :	Heather Allison Schlegel et al.	Art Unit :	2173
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Title :	ACCOUNT LINKING		

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents

Commissioner for Patents

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BRIEF ON APPEAL

(1) Real Party in Interest

AOL Inc. is the real party in interest.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no related appeals or interferences.

(3) Status of Claims

Claims 15-23, 25-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 48, and 50-53 are pending in the application. Claims 1-14, 24, 40, 43, 47, and 49 have been canceled. Claims 15-23, 25-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 48, and 50-53 stand rejected. The rejections of claims 15-23, 25-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 48, and 50-53 are being appealed.

(4) Status of Amendments

All amendments have been entered. No amendments to the claims have been filed after the final Office Action dated August 6, 2009.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The following summarizes disclosure related to each independent claim with references to the Application's specification and drawings. The references to the specification and drawings are meant to be exemplary and not limiting.

Independent Claim 15

Independent claim 15 is directed to a computer-implemented method for enabling electronic communications by a user having multiple accounts hosted by a single communications service provider that represents each of the multiple accounts with a corresponding screen name. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 5, lines 23-31 and page 12, lines 19-23.

A single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names is displayed. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. Each of the other screen names represents another account that is hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponds to another user with whom the user communicates electronically. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 2, lines 28-31 and page 5, lines 7-16. In addition, each individual list of other screen names corresponds to a different account of the user hosted by the single communications service provider. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. Also, each individual list of other screen names is separated from the other lists of screen names, contiguously lists a set of screen names representing other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to other users with whom the user communicates using the account to which the list corresponds, and is configurable to be arranged into one or more sub-lists of screen names, each sub-list including one or more of the screen names from the set of screen names. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. Furthermore, an individual screen name representing an individual account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to an individual user with whom the user communicates is listed in at least two of the multiple lists of other screen names. *See, e.g.*, Application at FIG. 4C ("Cindy Aserkoff").

The graphical user interface is used to enable selection, by the user from among the multiple accounts of the user hosted by the single communications service provider, of a particular source account from which to initiate an electronic communication. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 2, lines 28-31; page 13, line 28 to page 14, line 7; page 27, line 22-24; and FIGS. 4A-4B (elements 408a-408e) and FIG. 14A (element 1402). The graphical user interface

also is used to enable selection, from a list of screen names corresponding to the particular source account selected by the user and included in the graphical user interface, of a particular screen name to whom to send the electronic communication. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 2, line 31 to page 3, line 1; page 14, lines 13-15; page 15, lines 4-6; page 27, line 24; FIG. 14A (element 1404). The electronic communication then is sent to the particular screen name and the electronic communication sent to the particular screen name is identified as having been sent from the particular source account selected by the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 3, lines 1-2; page 27, lines 26-27; and FIG. 14A (element 408).

Independent Claim 23

Independent claim 23 is directed to a graphical user interface for facilitating communications by a user having multiple accounts hosted by a single instant messaging service provider that represents each of the multiple accounts with a corresponding screen name. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 5, lines 23-31 and page 12, lines 19-23.

A display portion is configured to make perceivable two or more instant messaging contact lists. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. Each instant messaging contacts list is associated with one of the multiple accounts of the user, is separated from the other instant messaging contacts lists, and includes a contiguous listing of other screen names. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. In addition, each of the other screen names represents another account that is hosted by the single instant messaging service provider. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 2, lines 28-31 and page 5, lines 7-16. Also, one or more visual indicators are configured to display the current logon status of the other screen names included in the instant messaging contacts lists associated with the multiple accounts of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 3, lines 23-24.

At least a first screen name from a first instant messaging contacts list associated with a first account of the user hosted by the single instant messaging service provider and represented by a first screen name is selectable as an intended recipient of an instant message from the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 3, lines 25-26; page 27, line 22-24; and FIG. 14A (element 1402). In addition, a second screen name from a second instant messaging contacts list associated with a

second account of the user hosted by the single instant messaging service provider and represented by a second screen name also is selectable as an intended recipient of an instant message from the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 3, lines 27-28; page 27, line 22-24; and FIG. 14A (element 1402). Furthermore, a third screen name representing an individual account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to an individual user with whom the user communicates is listed in both the first instant messaging contacts list and the second instant messaging contacts list. *See, e.g.*, Application at FIG. 4C ("Cindy Aserkoff").

Independent Claim 31

Independent claim 31 is directed to a computer-implemented method for linking multiple accounts of a user hosted by a single communications service provider that represents each of the accounts of the user with a unique screen name. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 5, lines 23-31 and page 12, lines 19-23.

A first contacts list is maintained that corresponds to a first account of a user who has multiple accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider for use in communicating electronically with other users. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. The first contacts list includes screen names that each represent another account hosted by the single communications service provider and correspond to another user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 2, lines 28-31 and page 5, lines 7-16. In addition, the first contacts list enables the user to communicate electronically with the other users corresponding to the screen names included within the first contacts list. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 14, lines 13-15 and page 15, lines 4-6.

A second contacts list also is maintained for the user that corresponds to a second account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. The second contacts list is separate from the first contacts list and includes additional screen names that each represent an additional account hosted by the single communications service provider and correspond to an additional user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 2, lines 28-31 and page 5, lines 7-16. The second contacts list also enables the user to communicate electronically with the additional users corresponding to the additional

screen names included within the second contacts list. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 14, lines 13-15 and page 15, lines 4-6.

A particular screen name representing a particular account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to a particular user is listed in both the first contacts list corresponding to the first account of the user and the second contacts list corresponding to the second account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at FIG. 4C ("Cindy Aserkoff").

The first account of the user is authenticated. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 18, lines 30-31 and FIG. 7 (elements 702 and 708). The second account of the user also is authenticated. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 19, lines 1-10 and FIG. 7 (element 708). An association is created between the first account of the user and the second account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 19, lines 9-10. The association between the first account of the user and the second account of the user triggers display of a single graphical user interface for both the first account of the user and the second account of the user in response to authentication of both the first account of the user and the second account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11.

The single graphical user interface is configured to display the first contacts list corresponding to the first account of the user separately from the second contacts list corresponding to the second account of the user such that the first contacts list includes a contiguous listing of the screen names representing the other accounts hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to the other users and the second contacts list includes a contiguous listing of the screen names representing the additional accounts hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to the additional users. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. In addition, the single graphical user interface also is configured to display the first contacts list corresponding to the first account of the user separately from the second contacts list corresponding to the second account of the user such that the single graphical user interface enables the user to interact with the first contacts list to communicate with the other users using the first account of the user and to interact with the second contacts list to communicate with the additional users using the second account of the user. *See, e.g.*,

Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11.

Independent Claim 45

Independent claim 45 is directed to a computer-implemented method for enabling instant messaging by a user who has at least two different instant messaging accounts hosted by a single instant messaging service provider that represents the two different instant messaging accounts with corresponding screen names. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 5, lines 23-31 and page 12, lines 19-23.

A single instant messaging graphical user interface is displayed to a user who has both a first instant messaging account and a second instant messaging account that are hosted by a single instant messaging service provider. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. The single instant messaging graphical user interface includes a first instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the first instant messaging account of the user and that includes a first contiguous listing of instant messaging screen names that the user has selected for inclusion in the first instant messaging contacts list. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. Each of the screen names included in the first contiguous listing represents an instant messaging account also hosted by the single instant messaging service provider. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 2, lines 28-31 and page 5, lines 7-16.

The single instant messaging graphical user interface also includes a second instant messaging contacts list that is separated from the first instant messaging participant list, that corresponds to the second instant messaging account of the user, and that includes a second contiguous listing of instant messaging screen names that the user has selected for inclusion in the second instant messaging contacts list. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. Each of the screen names included in the second contiguous listing represents an instant messaging account also hosted by the single instant messaging service provider. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 2, lines 28-31 and page 5, lines 7-16.

A particular instant messaging screen name representing a particular instant messaging account hosted by the single instant messaging service provider is listed in both the first instant messaging contacts list and the second instant messaging contacts list. *See, e.g.*, Application at FIG. 4C ("Cindy Aserkoff").

An indication of a selection by the user from within the instant messaging graphical user interface of the particular instant messaging screen name from the first instant messaging contacts list is received. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 15, lines 4-6. In response, the user is enabled to compose a first instant message to the particular instant messaging screen name. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 15, lines 4-6. Based on the selection of the particular instant messaging screen name from the first instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the first instant messaging account of the user, the first instant message composed by the user is sent to the particular instant messaging screen name in a manner that identifies the first instant message as having been sent from the first instant messaging account. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 3, lines 1-2; page 27, lines 26-27; and FIG. 14A (element 408).

An indication of a selection by the user from within the instant messaging graphical user interface of the particular instant messaging screen name from the second instant messaging contacts list is received. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 15, lines 4-6. In response, the user is enabled to compose a second instant message to the particular instant messaging screen name. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 15, lines 4-6. Based on the selection of the particular instant messaging screen name from the second instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the second instant messaging account of the user, the second instant message composed by the user is sent to the particular instant messaging screen name in a manner that identifies the second instant message as having been sent from the second instant messaging account. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 3, lines 1-2; page 27, lines 26-27; and FIG. 14A (element 408).

Independent Claim 52

Independent claim 52 is directed to a computer-implemented method.

A single graphical user interface is displayed that includes a first group label that corresponds to a first electronic messaging account of a user hosted by a particular electronic messaging service provider and a second group label that corresponds to a second electronic

messaging account of the user also hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. In addition, the single graphical user interface also includes a first contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names, each representing another electronic messaging account also hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider and corresponding to another user with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11.

The first contiguous listing is oriented in a position corresponding to the first group label and configured to reflect on-line presence information for at least some of the messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. Similarly, the second contiguous listing also includes a listing of multiple messaging screen names, each representing another electronic messaging account also hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider and corresponding to another user with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. The second contiguous listing is separated from the first contiguous listing of messaging contacts, is oriented in a position corresponding to the second group label, and is configured to reflect on-line presence information for at least some of the messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 19 to page 15, line 6; page 22, line 29 to page 23, line 15; and FIGS. 4A-4C and 11. In addition, a particular messaging screen name representing a particular electronic messaging account hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider and corresponding to a particular user is listed in both the first contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names and the second contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names. *See, e.g.*, Application at FIG. 4C ("Cindy Aserkoff").

The first group label is selectable to inspire visual display or obfuscation of the first contiguous listing of messaging screen names with whom the user communicates using the first

electronic messaging account of the user and the second group label is selectable to inspire visual display or obfuscation of the second contiguous listing of messaging screen names with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 13, line 28 to page 14, line 7; and FIGS. 4A-4B (elements 408a-408e).

An indication of a selection by the user of the particular messaging screen name from the first contiguous listing of messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user is received. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 15, lines 4-6. In response, the user is enabled to compose and send to the particular messaging screen name an electronic message that is identified as originating from the first electronic messaging account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 3, lines 1-2; page 15, lines 4-6; page 27, lines 26-27; and FIG. 14A (element 408). An indication of a selection by the user of the particular messaging contact from the second contiguous listing of messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user also is received. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 15, lines 4-6. In response, the user is enabled to compose and send to the particular messaging contact an electronic message that is identified as originating from the second electronic messaging account of the user. *See, e.g.*, Application at page 3, lines 1-2; page 15, lines 4-6; page 27, lines 26-27; and FIG. 14A (element 408).

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

Claims 15-23, 25-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 48, and 50-53 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 7,275,215 (Werndorfer) in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,185,059 (Daniell). The rejections of claims 15-23, 25-39, 41, 42, 44-46, 48, and 50-53 are being appealed.

(7) Argument

Claims 15-22, 29, 30, and 50

Independent claim 15 recites a computer-implemented method for enabling electronic communications by a user having multiple accounts hosted by a single communications service

provider that represents each of the multiple accounts of the user hosted by the communications service provider with a corresponding screen name. Among other features, the method includes displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names, each of which corresponds to a *different account of the user hosted by the single communications service provider* and contiguously lists a set of screen names that represent *other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider* and that correspond to other users with whom the user communicates using the account to which the list corresponds. In addition, independent claim 15 recites that an individual screen name representing an individual account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to an individual user with whom the user communicates is listed in at least two of the multiple lists of other screen names.

The combination of Werndorfer and Daniell fails to render independent claim 15 obvious at least because the combination of Werndorfer and Daniell does not describe or suggest at least:

(1) displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names that represent other accounts that are hosted by a single communications service provider;

(2) a single communications service provider that hosts multiple different accounts of a user and that represents each of the multiple accounts with a corresponding screen name; and

(3) displaying a single graphical user interface wherein an individual screen name is listed in at least two lists that represent other accounts that are hosted by a single communications service provider.

Werndorfer discloses a unified instant messaging client platform that is interoperable with multiple, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers. *See, e.g.,* Werndorfer at col. 3, lines 38-62. As described by Werndorfer, the unified instant messaging client platform provides an instant messaging graphical user interface that enables a user to compose and send instant messages using different accounts provided by the different, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers. *See, e.g.,* Werndorfer at col. 3, line 63 to col. 6, line 53.

FIG. 3 of Werndorfer, which is reproduced below for reference, provides an illustration of Werndorfer's instant messaging graphical user interface.

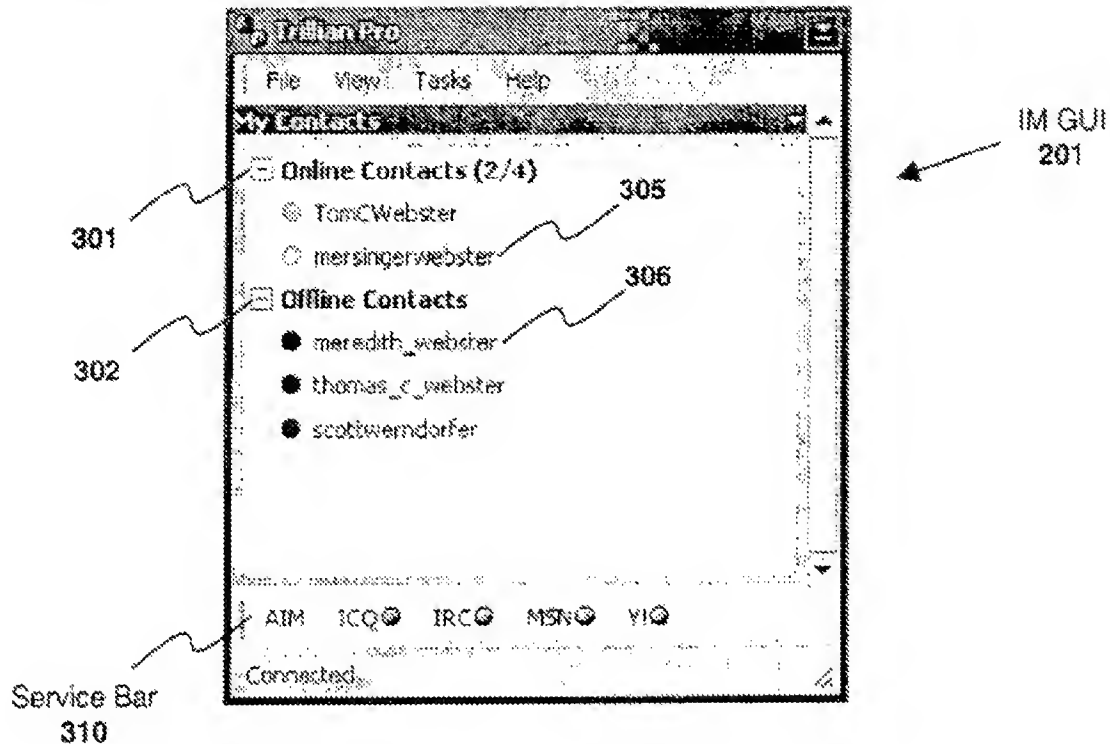


Fig. 3

FIG. 3 of Werndorfer.

As illustrated in FIG. 3, Werndorfer's instant messaging graphical user interface includes a single instant messaging contacts list that has been compiled for a user of Werndorfer's system by combining the user's instant messaging contacts lists from different, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers (i.e., AIM, ICQ, IRC, MSN, and Yahoo!) into a single instant messaging contacts list. Individual icons displayed adjacent to the screen names in the instant messaging contacts list are used to identify the instant messaging contacts lists from which the different screen names have been drawn. For example, one icon is used to identify screen names drawn from the user's AIM instant messaging contacts list and a different icon is used to identify screen names drawn from the user's ICQ instant messaging contacts list.

As the final Office Action acknowledges, Werndorfer fails to describe or suggest a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names. See, e.g., final Office Action of August 6, 2009 at page 4, lines 2-12. As such, it follows that Werndorfer also fails to describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate *multiple lists of other screen names* that represent other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider, as recited in independent claim 15.

Moreover, Werndorfer also does not describe or suggest that Werndorfer's own system itself hosts any instant messaging accounts. Rather, Werndorfer describes that its platform merely serves as an interface that enables a user to use a single instant messaging client platform to communicate with other users who have instant messaging accounts that are hosted by multiple other and different instant messaging service providers like AOL, Yahoo!, and Microsoft:

Unlike prior buddy lists . . . , the buddy lists illustrated in FIG. 3 may include contacts from various different IM services. For example, the contact entries "MerSingerWebster" . . . and "Meredith_Webster" . . . may be screen names for the same individual on *different IM services (e.g., AOL and Yahoo)*.

Werndorfer at col. 3, line 67 to col. 4, line 5 (emphasis added). Notably, there is no disclosure in Werndorfer that Werndorfer's system itself hosts any instant messaging accounts and, thus, there is no disclosure in Werndorfer that any of the screen names listed in Werndorfer's instant messaging graphical user interface illustrated in FIG. 3 are hosted by Werndorfer's system. Therefore, for at least this additional reason, Werndorfer also fails to describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names that represent *other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider*, as recited in independent claim 15.

Because Werndorfer does not describe or suggest that Werndorfer's system itself hosts any instant messaging accounts, it follows that Werndorfer also does not describe or suggest *a single communications service provider that hosts multiple different accounts of a user* and that represents each of the multiple accounts with a corresponding screen name, as also recited in independent claim 15. Moreover, Werndorfer's disclosure is explicit in stating that the whole

point of Werndorfer's system is to enable a user to access different instant messaging accounts hosted by different, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers, not instant messaging accounts hosted by the same instant messaging service provider. *See, e.g.*, Werndorfer at col. 3, lines 29-40.

Daniell is similarly deficient. Daniell describes a graphical user interface that is similar to the instant messaging graphical user interface illustrated in FIG. 3 of Werndorfer in that it enables a user to access different instant messaging accounts provided by different, normally incompatible instant messaging providers. *See, e.g.*, Daniell at Abstract; col. 18, lines 3-19; and FIG. 14. FIG. 14 of Daniell, which is reproduced below for reference, provides an illustration of Daniell's instant messaging graphical user interface:

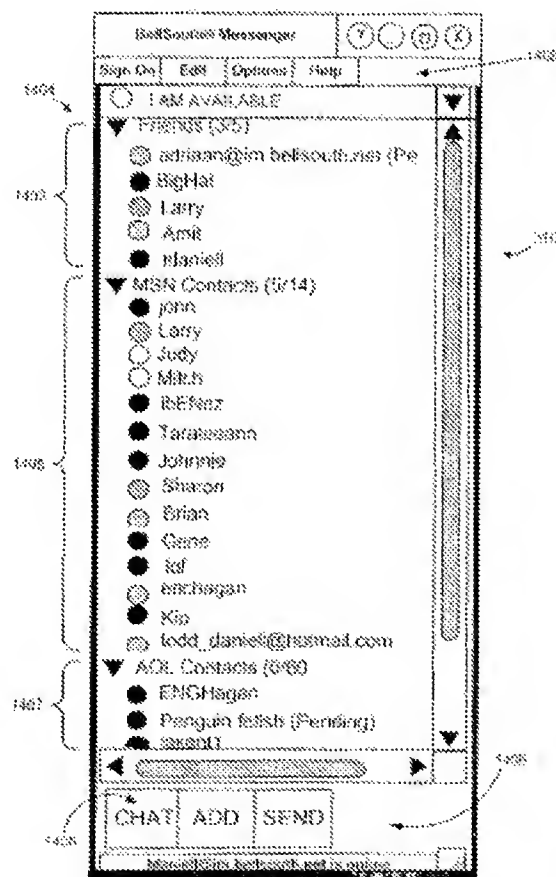


FIG. 14

FIG. 14 of Daniell.

As illustrated in FIG. 14, Daniell's instant messaging graphical user interface includes a single instant messaging contacts list that has been compiled for a user of Daniell's system by combining the user's instant messaging contacts lists from different, normally incompatible instant messaging service providers (i.e., BellSouth, MSN, and AOL) into a single instant messaging contacts list.

Specifically, FIG. 14 illustrates a list of the user's contacts that is subdivided into a BellSouth contacts group (listing contacts whose IM service is hosted by BellSouth), an MSN contacts group (listing contacts whose IM service is hosted by MSN), and an AOL contacts group (listing contacts whose IM service is hosted by AOL). Notably, each group of contacts represented in FIG. 14 corresponds to contacts whose IM service is hosted by a different service provider. There are no two groups of contacts represented in FIG. 14 that both correspond to contacts whose IM service is hosted by the same service provider. As such, Daniell does not describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate *multiple lists of other screen names that represent other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider*, as recited in independent claim 15.

The Advisory Action attempts to rebut this position. Specifically, the Advisory Action asserts that:

Daniell discloses a single graphical user interface as shown in Figure 14 that accommodates multiple lists of screen names. These lists represent different accounts of one user including an MSN account and an AOL account. The single communications service provider that enables the instant messaging system to communicate between multiple users is the "BellSouth Messenger." BellSouth is the system that hosts the multiple accounts that the user is using.

Advisory Action of March 1, 2010 at Continuation Sheet.

This argument is flawed. First, it does not address applicants' argument that there are no two groups of contacts represented in FIG. 14 that both list contacts whose IM service is hosted by the same service provider. Rather, the contacts listed in the BellSouth contacts group have an IM service that is hosted by BellSouth, while the contacts listed in the MSN contacts group have an IM service that is hosted by MSN and the contacts listed in the AOL contacts group have an IM service that is hosted by AOL. Because Daniell does not describe or suggest that at least two

groups of contacts represented in FIG. 14 both list contacts whose IM service is hosted by the same service provider, Daniell does not describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate *multiple lists of other screen names that represent other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider*, as recited in independent claim 15.

Furthermore, the Advisory Action contends that BellSouth is the system that hosts the multiple accounts that the user is using, and, yet, the Advisory Action also acknowledges that the other accounts of the user are an MSN account and an AOL account. BellSouth does not host these accounts. Rather, MSN hosts one of these accounts (i.e., the MSN account) and AOL hosts the other account (i.e., the AOL account). Therefore, even if BellSouth is taken to correspond to the single communications service provider recited in independent claim 15, as asserted by the Advisory Action, Daniell does not describe or suggest that BellSouth hosts multiple accounts of the user. Rather, at most, Daniell describes that BellSouth hosts a single account of the user. Thus, Daniell does not describe or suggest *a single communications service provider that hosts multiple different accounts of a user* and that represents each of the multiple accounts with a corresponding screen name, as recited in independent claim 15.

Daniell also does not describe or suggest displaying a single graphical user interface wherein an individual screen name is listed in at least two lists that represent other accounts that are hosted by a single communications service provider. That this is the case becomes quite apparent when one considers that, as discussed above, each group of contacts represented in FIG. 14 of Daniell corresponds to contacts whose IM service is hosted by a different service provider. Thus, if the same screen name were to be listed in at least two of the groups of contacts represented in FIG. 14 of Daniell, the screen name would be inoperable in at least one of the groups, because the IM services for the two groups are hosted by different service providers and, thus, at least one of the service providers would not recognize the IM screen name.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 15 and its dependent claims, claims 16-22, 29, 30, and 50.

Dependent claim 22 modifies independent claim 15 by reciting that the method of claim 15 further comprises, responsive to an addition of a new screen name to the list for one of the

multiple accounts of the user, adding the new screen name to the lists for the other of the multiple accounts of the user. In support of the rejection of dependent claim 22, the final Office Action contends that Werndorfer teaches this feature at column 3, lines 39-47. *See, e.g.*, final Office Action of August 6, 2009 at page 6, lines 4-7. This passage from Werndorfer, however, is irrelevant:

To solve this and other problems, the assignee of the present application has developed a unified messaging client platform which is interoperable with each of the different IM services. Referring to FIG. 2, the IM client platform 200 is comprised generally of an IM application portion 202, which contains standard IM functions used by each IM service 100, 108, 210 (e.g., a buddy list, user defined online/offline parameters, and other universal IM features described below). Users interact with the IM application 202 via an IM graphical user interface ("GUI") 201, various features of which are described below.

Werndorfer at col. 3, lines 29-47. Moreover, not only does the cited passage of Werndorfer not have anything to do with the features recited in dependent claim 22, but, as the final Office Action itself acknowledges, Werndorfer does not describe or suggest a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names. *See, e.g.*, final Office Action of August 6, 2009 at page 4, lines 2-12. Thus, Werndorfer cannot possibly recite, responsive to an addition of a new screen name to the list for one of the multiple accounts of the user, adding the new screen name to the lists for the other of the multiple accounts of the user, as recited in dependent claim 22. Accordingly, for at least this additional reason, applicants request reversal of the rejection of dependent claim 22.

Claims 23 and 25-28

Independent claim 23 recites a graphical user interface for facilitating communications by a user having multiple accounts hosted by a single instant messaging service provider that represents each of the multiple accounts of the user hosted by the instant messaging service provider with a corresponding screen name. As recited in independent claim 23, the graphical user interface includes one or more window interfaces that are structured and arranged to enable, among other features, a display portion configured to make perceivable two or more instant

messaging contact lists, wherein each instant messaging contacts list is associated with one of the multiple accounts of the user, is separated from the other instant messaging contacts lists, and includes a contiguous listing of other screen names, each of the other screen names representing another account that is hosted by the single instant messaging service provider. In addition, independent claim 23 recites that a screen name representing an individual account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to an individual user with whom the user communicates is listed in both a first and a second one of the instant messaging contacts lists.

For reasons that are analogous to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, applicants submit that Werndorfer and Daniell do not describe or suggest these features of independent claim 23. Accordingly, for at least this reason, applicants request reversal of the rejection of independent claim 23 and its dependent claims, claims 25-28.

Claims 31-39, 41, 42, 44, and 51

Independent claim 31 recites a computer-implemented method for linking multiple accounts of a user hosted by a single communications service provider that represents each of the accounts of the user with a corresponding screen name that includes, among other features, maintaining, for a user who has multiple accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider, a first contacts list that corresponds to a first account of the user and that includes screen names that each represent another account hosted by the single communications service provider, and maintaining, for the user, a second contacts list that corresponds to a second account of the user and that includes additional screen names that each represent an additional account hosted by the single communications service provider. In addition, independent claim 31 recites that a particular screen name representing a particular account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to a particular user is listed in both the first contacts list and the second contacts list.

For reasons that are analogous to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, applicants submit that Werndorfer and Daniell do not describe or suggest these features of independent claim 31. Accordingly, for at least this reason, applicants request reversal of the rejection of independent claim 31 and its dependent claims, claims 32-39, 41, 42, 44, and 51.

Claims 45, 46, and 48

Independent claim 45 recites a computer-implemented method for enabling instant messaging by a user who has at least two different instant messaging accounts hosted by a single instant messaging service provider that represents the two different instant messaging accounts with corresponding screen names. As recited in independent claim 45, the method includes displaying, to a user who has both a first instant messaging account and a second instant messaging account that are hosted by a single instant messaging service provider, a single instant messaging graphical user interface that includes a first instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the first instant messaging account of the user and that includes a first contiguous listing of instant messaging screen names that each represent an instant messaging account also hosted by the single instant messaging service provider, and a second instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the second instant messaging account of the user and that includes a second contiguous listing of instant messaging screen names that each represent an instant messaging account also hosted by the single instant messaging service provider. In addition, independent claim 45 also recites that a particular instant messaging screen name representing a particular instant messaging account hosted by the single instant messaging service provider is listed in both the first instant messaging contacts list and the second instant messaging contacts list.

For reasons that are analogous to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, applicants submit that Werndorfer and Daniell do not describe or suggest these features of independent claim 45. Accordingly, applicants request reversal of the rejection of independent claim 45 and its dependent claims, claims 46 and 48.

Claims 52 and 53

Independent claim 52 recites a computer-implemented method that includes, among other features, displaying a single graphical user interface that includes a first contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names that each represent an electronic messaging account hosted by a particular electronic messaging service provider, and a second contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names that each represent another electronic messaging account also hosted by

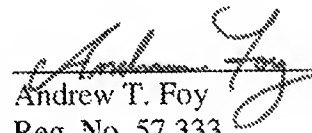
the particular electronic messaging service provider. In addition, independent claim 52 also recites that a particular messaging screen name representing a particular electronic messaging account hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider and corresponding to a particular user is listed in both the first contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names and the second contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names.

For reasons that are analogous to those discussed above in connection with independent claim 15, applicants submit that Werndorfer and Daniell do not describe or suggest these features of independent claim 52. Accordingly, applicants request reversal of the rejection of independent claim 52 and its dependent claim, claim 53.

The Brief Fee of \$540 and the One-month Extension of Time Fee of \$130 are being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply any other charges or credits due in connection with the filing of this Brief or otherwise to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 8, 2010



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Appendix of Claims

1-14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method for enabling electronic communications by a user having multiple accounts hosted by a single communications service provider that represents each of the multiple accounts of the user hosted by the communications service provider with a corresponding screen name, the method comprising:

displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of other screen names, each of the other screen names representing another account that is hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to another user with whom the user communicates electronically, wherein:

each individual list of other screen names corresponds to a different account of the user hosted by the single communications service provider, is separated from the other lists of screen names, contiguously lists a set of screen names representing other accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to other users with whom the user communicates using the account to which the list corresponds, and is configurable to be arranged into one or more sub-lists of screen names, each sub-list including one or more of the screen names from the set of screen names, and

an individual screen name representing an individual account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to an individual user with whom the user communicates is listed in at least two of the multiple lists of other screen names;

using the graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the multiple accounts of the user hosted by the single communications service provider, of a particular source account from which to initiate an electronic communication;

using the graphical user interface to enable selection, from a list of screen names corresponding to the particular source account selected by the user and included in the graphical user interface, of a particular screen name to whom to send the electronic communication;

sending the electronic communication to the particular screen name; and

identifying the electronic communication sent to the particular screen name as having been sent from the particular source account selected by the user.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 15 wherein the multiple accounts of the user are linked using linking logic based on a remote server.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 16 further comprising offering the user a list of potential accounts to which a link from the multiple accounts may be created, wherein the list of potential accounts is created based on relationships between the potential accounts and the multiple accounts known to exist within the remote server.

18. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 15 further comprising receiving a response to the electronic communication from the particular screen name and addressed to the particular source account.

19. (Previously presented) The method as in claim 15 further comprising:

logging on to the single communications service using a first account of the user that differs from the particular source account; and

in response to logging on to the single communications service using the first account of the user, automatically being logged on to the single communications service for the particular source account.

20. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 15 further comprising displaying indications of the several accounts of the user in the single graphical user interface.

21. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 20 further comprising displaying the lists of other screen names associated with each of the multiple accounts of the user in the single graphical user interface.

22. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 15 further comprising, responsive to an addition of a new screen name to the list for one of the multiple accounts of the user, adding the new screen name to the lists for the other of the multiple accounts of the user.

23. (Previously Presented) A graphical user interface for facilitating communications by a user having multiple accounts hosted by a single instant messaging service provider that represents each of the multiple accounts of the user hosted by the instant messaging service

provider with a corresponding screen name, the graphical user interface comprising one or more window interfaces that are structured and arranged to enable:

- a display portion configured to make perceivable two or more instant messaging contact lists, wherein each instant messaging contacts list is associated with one of the multiple accounts of the user, is separated from the other instant messaging contacts lists, and includes a contiguous listing of other screen names, each of the other screen names representing another account that is hosted by the single instant messaging service provider; and

- one or more visual indicators that are configured to display the current logon status of the other screen names included in the instant messaging contacts lists associated with the multiple accounts of the user; and

- wherein at least a first screen name from a first instant messaging contacts list associated with a first account of the user hosted by the single instant messaging service provider and represented by a first screen name is selectable as an intended recipient of an instant message from the user, and

- wherein at least a second screen name from a second instant messaging contacts list associated with a second account of the user hosted by the single instant messaging service provider and represented by a second screen name also is selectable as an intended recipient of an instant message from the user, and

- wherein a third screen name representing an individual account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to an individual user with whom the user communicates is listed in both the first instant messaging contacts list and the second instant messaging contacts list.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) The graphical user interface of claim 23 wherein the window interfaces are structured and arranged to enable sign on of additional of the multiple accounts of the user in response to a sign on of one of the multiple accounts of the user.

26. (Previously Presented) The graphical user interface of claim 23 wherein the window interfaces are structured and arranged to enable sign on of additional of the multiple accounts of the user in response to a sign on of any one of the multiple accounts of the user.

27. (Previously Presented) The graphical user interface of claim 23 wherein the window interfaces are structured and arranged to enable the user to designate preferences for each of the multiple accounts of the user.

28. (Previously Presented) The graphical user interface of claim 23 wherein the window interfaces are structured and arranged to enable the user to designate preferences for one of the multiple accounts of the user, wherein the preferences are applied globally to the other accounts of the user.

29. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 15 wherein displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of screen names with whom

the user communicates electronically comprises displaying a single graphical user interface that is configured to:

enable the user to select a particular list corresponding to a particular one of the multiple accounts of the user; and

in response to a selection by the user of the particular list corresponding to the particular account, display the particular list that corresponds to the particular account selected by the user.

30. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 15 wherein displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates electronically comprises concurrently displaying lists corresponding to each of at least two accounts of the user.

31. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method for linking multiple accounts of a user hosted by a single communications service provider that represents each of the accounts of the user with a unique screen name, the method comprising:

maintaining, for a user who has multiple accounts that are hosted by the single communications service provider for use in communicating electronically with other users, a first contacts list corresponding to a first account of the user, the first contacts list including screen names that each represent another account hosted by the single communications service provider and correspond to another user, and the first contacts list enabling the user to communicate electronically with the other users corresponding to the screen names included within the first contacts list;

maintaining, for the user, a second contacts list corresponding to a second account of the user, the second contacts list being separate from the first contacts list and including additional screen names that each represent an additional account hosted by the single communications service provider and correspond to an additional user, and the second contacts list enabling the user to communicate electronically with the additional users corresponding to the additional screen names included within the second contacts list, wherein a particular screen name representing a particular account hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding a particular user is listed in both the first contacts list corresponding to the first account of the user and the second contacts list corresponding to the second account of the user;

authenticating the first account of the user;

authenticating the second account of the user; and

creating an association between the first account of the user and the second account of the user, wherein the association between the first account of the user and the second account of the user triggers display of a single graphical user interface for both the first account of the user and the second account of the user in response to authentication of both the first account of the user and the second account of the user, the single graphical user interface being configured to display the first contacts list corresponding to the first account of the user separately from the second contacts list corresponding to the second account of the user such that:

the first contacts list includes a contiguous listing of the screen names

representing the other accounts hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to the other users and the second contacts list includes a contiguous listing

of the screen names representing the additional accounts hosted by the single communications service provider and corresponding to the additional users, and the single graphical user interface enables the user to interact with the first contacts list to communicate with the other users using the first account of the user and to interact with the second contacts list to communicate with the additional users using the second account of the user.

32. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 wherein:
authenticating the first account includes using a first password to authenticate the first account; and
authenticating the second account includes using a second password to authenticate the second account.

33. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 32 wherein the first password and the second password are the same.

34. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 32 wherein the first password and the second password are different.

35. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 wherein:
authenticating the first account includes using a SecureID to authenticate the first account; and

authenticating the second account includes using a SecureID to authenticate the second account.

36. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 wherein creating the association between the first account and the second account includes using a one-way link configuration to create the association between the first account and the second account.

37. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 wherein creating the association between the first account and the second account includes using a bi-directional-link configuration to create the association between the first account and the second account.

38. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 wherein creating the association between the first account and the second account includes using a star-link configuration to create the association between the first account and the second account.

39. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 wherein creating the association between the first account and the second account includes using a mesh-link configuration to create the association between the first account and the second account.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 further comprising setting preferences for the first account, wherein setting the preferences for the first account also sets the preferences for the second account.

42. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 further comprising:

setting first preferences for the first account; and

setting second preferences for the second account.

43. (Canceled)

44. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 31 wherein the single communications service enables linking multiple accounts hosted by the single communications service so as to enable presence of one account to be reflected based on a login of another account of the multiple accounts.

45. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method for enabling instant messaging by a user who has at least two different instant messaging accounts hosted by a single instant messaging service provider that represents the two different instant messaging accounts with corresponding screen names, the method comprising:

displaying, to a user who has both a first instant messaging account and a second instant messaging account that are hosted by a single instant messaging service provider, a single instant messaging graphical user interface that includes:

a first instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the first instant messaging account of the user and that includes a first contiguous listing of instant messaging screen names that the user has selected for inclusion in the first instant messaging contacts list, each of the screen names included in the first contiguous listing representing an instant messaging account also hosted by the single instant messaging service provider, and

a second instant messaging contacts list that is separated from the first instant messaging participant list, that corresponds to the second instant messaging account of the user, and that includes a second contiguous listing of instant messaging screen names that the user has selected for inclusion in the second instant messaging contacts list, each of the screen names included in the second contiguous listing representing an instant messaging account also hosted by the single instant messaging service provider, wherein a particular instant messaging screen name representing a particular instant messaging account hosted by the single instant messaging service provider is listed in both the first instant messaging contacts list and the second instant messaging contacts list;

receiving an indication of a selection by the user from within the instant messaging graphical user interface of the particular instant messaging screen name from the first instant messaging contacts list;

in response to receiving the indication of the selection of the particular instant messaging screen name from the first instant messaging contacts list, enabling the user to compose a first instant message to the particular instant messaging screen name;

based on the selection of the particular instant messaging screen name from the first instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the first instant messaging account of the user, sending the first instant message composed by the user to the particular instant messaging screen name in a manner that identifies the first instant message as having been sent from the first instant messaging account;

receiving an indication of a selection by the user from within the instant messaging graphical user interface of the particular instant messaging screen name from the second instant messaging contacts list;

in response to receiving the indication of the selection of the particular instant messaging screen name from the second instant messaging contacts list, enabling the user to compose a second instant message to the particular instant messaging screen name; and

based on the selection of the particular instant messaging screen name from the second instant messaging contacts list that corresponds to the second instant messaging account of the user, sending the second instant message composed by the user to the particular instant messaging screen name in a manner that identifies the second instant message as having been sent from the second instant messaging account.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45 further comprising collapsing the first instant messaging contacts list within the instant messaging graphical user interface such that the contiguous listing of the instant messaging screen names that the user selected for inclusion in the first instant messaging contacts list is not visible within the instant messaging graphical user interface after collapsing the first instant messaging contacts list.

47. (Canceled)

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45 wherein displaying the single instant messaging graphical user interface that includes both the first instant messaging contacts list and the second instant messaging contacts list includes concurrently displaying both the contiguous listing of the instant messaging screen names that the user selected for inclusion in the first instant messaging contacts list and the contiguous listing of the instant messaging screen names that the user selected for inclusion in the second instant messaging contacts list within the single instant messaging graphical user interface on a single display screen.

49. (Canceled)

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein:
the communications service is an instant messaging service;
the multiple accounts of the user are instant messaging accounts with the instant messaging service;
displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates electronically includes displaying a single graphical user interface configured to accommodate multiple lists of screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates via instant messaging;

using the graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the multiple accounts of the user, of a particular source account from which to initiate an electronic communication includes using the graphical user interface to enable selection, by the user from among the several instant messaging accounts of the user, of a particular source instant messaging account from which to initiate an instant message;

using the graphical user interface to enable selection, from a list of screen names corresponding to the particular source account selected by the user, of a particular screen name to whom to send the electronic communication includes using the graphical user interface to enable selection, from a list of screen names corresponding to the particular source instant messaging account selected by the user, of a particular screen name to whom to send the instant message; and

sending the electronic communication to the particular screen name such that the electronic communication is identified to the particular screen name as being sent from the particular source account selected by the user includes sending the instant message to the particular screen name such that the instant message is identified to the particular screen name as being sent from the particular source instant messaging account selected by the user.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein:

the communications service is an instant messaging service;

the first account of the user is a first instant messaging account of the user hosted by the instant messaging service;

the second account of the user is a second instant messaging account of the user hosted by the instant messaging service;

maintaining, for the user a first contacts list corresponding to the first account of the user, includes maintaining, for the user, a first instant messaging contacts list corresponding to the first instant messaging account of the user, the first instant messaging contacts list including one or more instant messaging screen names corresponding to other users and enabling the user to communicate via instant messaging with the other users;

maintaining, for the user, a second contacts list corresponding to the second account of the user, includes maintaining, for the user, a second instant messaging contacts list corresponding to the second instant messaging account of the user, the second instant messaging contacts list being separate from the first instant messaging contacts list, including one or more additional instant messaging screen names associated with one or more additional users, and enabling the user to communicate via instant messaging with the additional users;

authenticating the first account of the user includes authenticating the first instant messaging account of the user;

authenticating the second account of the user includes authenticating the first instant messaging account of the user;

creating an association between the first account of the user and the second account of the user includes creating an association between the first instant messaging account of the user and the second instant messaging account of the user; and

the association between the first instant messaging account of the user and the second instant messaging account of the user triggers display of a single graphical user interface for both

the first instant messaging account of the user and the second instant messaging account of the user in response to authentication of both the first instant messaging account of the user and the second instant messaging account of the user, the single graphical user interface being configured to display the first instant messaging contacts list corresponding to the first instant messaging account of the user separately from the second instant messaging contacts list corresponding to the second instant messaging account of the user such that:

- the first instant messaging contacts list includes a contiguous listing of the screen names corresponding to the other users and the second contacts list includes a contiguous listing of the screen names corresponding to the additional users, and

- the single graphical user interface enables the user to interact with the first instant messaging contacts list to communicate with the other users via instant messaging using the first instant messaging account of the user and to interact with the second instant messaging contacts list to communicate with the additional users via instant messaging using the second instant messaging account of the user.

52. (Previously Presented) A computer-implemented method comprising:

displaying a single graphical user interface that includes:

- a first group label that corresponds to a first electronic messaging account of a user hosted by a particular electronic messaging service provider,

- a second group label that corresponds to a second electronic messaging account of the user also hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider,

a first contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names, each of the screen names included in the first contiguous listing representing another electronic messaging account also hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider and corresponding to another user with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user, the first contiguous listing being oriented in a position corresponding to the first group label and configured to reflect on-line presence information for at least some of the messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user,

a second contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names, each of the screen names included in the second contiguous listing representing another electronic messaging account also hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider and corresponding to another user with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user, the second contiguous listing being separated from the first contiguous listing of messaging contacts with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user, oriented in a position corresponding to the second group label, and configured to reflect on-line presence information for at least some of the messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user, wherein:

a particular messaging screen name representing a particular electronic messaging account hosted by the particular electronic messaging service provider and corresponding to a particular user is listed in both the first contiguous listing

of multiple messaging screen names and the second contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names,

the first group label is selectable to inspire visual display or obfuscation of the first contiguous listing of messaging screen names with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user, and

the second group label is selectable to inspire visual display or obfuscation of the second contiguous listing of messaging screen names with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user;

receiving an indication of a selection by the user of the particular messaging screen name from the first contiguous listing of messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user;

in response to receiving the indication of the selection by the user of the particular messaging screen name, enabling the user to compose and send to the particular messaging screen name an electronic message that is identified as originating from the first electronic messaging account of the user;

receiving an indication of a selection by the user of the particular messaging contact from the second contiguous listing of messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user; and

in response to receiving the indication of the selection by the user of the particular messaging contact, enabling the user to compose and send to the particular messaging contact an electronic message that is identified as originating from the second electronic messaging account of the user.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 52 wherein displaying a single graphical user interface that includes a first contiguous listing of messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user and a second contiguous listing of multiple messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user includes displaying a single graphical user interface that includes:

- a first contiguous listing of messaging screen names that is arranged into multiple contiguous sub-listings of messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the first electronic messaging account of the user, each of which is associated with a different identifiable label; and

- a second contiguous listing of messaging screen names that is arranged into multiple contiguous sub-listings of messaging screen names corresponding to users with whom the user communicates using the second electronic messaging account of the user, each of which is associated with a different identifiable label.

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Evidence Appendix

None.

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Related Proceedings Appendix

None.